



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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December 24, 2012

Ms. Nancy Stoner  
Acting Assistant Administrator  
Office of Water  
USEPA Headquarters  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Mail Code: 4101M  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Ms. Stoner:

On behalf of Governor Gregoire, the state of Washington requests that the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) begin an assessment of water quality criteria relevant to ocean acidification. In doing so, we encourage USEPA to work with scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Washington State Department of Ecology and other appropriate agencies in carrying out this effort.

This request is part of Executive Order 12-07 that was signed by Governor Gregoire on November 27, 2012. This executive order came in response to recommendations from the Washington State Ocean Acidification Blue Ribbon Panel that was convened by the Governor to chart a course for addressing the effects of ocean acidification on Washington's shellfish resources and other marine organisms. The Blue Ribbon Panel was comprised of scientific experts, industry representatives, public opinion leaders, and state, local, federal and tribal policy makers, including representation from EPA Region 10.

The panel produced a *Scientific Summary of Ocean Acidification in Washington State Marine Waters*, documenting the understanding of ocean acidification in Washington. The panel also produced a document titled *Ocean Acidification: From Knowledge to Action – Washington's Strategic Response to Changing Ocean Chemistry* that recommended actions to reduce contributions to the problem, help the shellfish industry adapt to changes in the marine ecosystem, advance our knowledge about acidification in Washington's marine waters, and educate and engage stakeholders, the public and decision makers in addressing the problem. Information on the panel's efforts can be found at:  
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/water/marine/oceanacidification.html>.

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Several members of the panel, including tribal representatives and a renowned scientist from NOAA's Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory, highlighted the inadequacy of current pH standards for identifying water quality impacts due to ocean acidification. Scientific panel members pointed to recent scientific research suggesting that other ocean chemistry parameters and biological indicators may be more relevant to local acidification. Given the national significance of recommending water quality standards for identifying ocean acidification impacts, it was recommended that USEPA should take the lead in evaluating the applicability of other water quality criteria identified by recent research or recommended by scientific experts in the fields of ocean acidification and water quality.

On behalf of Governor Gregoire and the state of Washington, I want to thank USEPA for your leadership and support in addressing the challenges of climate change, in particular concerns regarding water quality impacts due to ocean acidification.

If you have questions regarding the Blue Ribbon Panel efforts, please contact Hedia Adelsman at (360) 407-6222 or by email at [hedia.adelsman@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:hedia.adelsman@ecy.wa.gov). Questions regarding the recommendation for exploring new criteria for ocean acidification should be directed to Susan Braley at (360) 407-6414 or by email at [susan.braley@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:susan.braley@ecy.wa.gov).

Sincerely,



Ted Sturdevant  
Director

Enclosure: Executive Order 12-07, Washington's Response to Ocean Acidification

cc: Dennis McLerran, USEPA Region 10 Administrator  
Dr. Jane Lubchenco, NOAA Administrator  
William Ruckelshaus, Blue Ribbon Panel Co-chair  
Jay Manning, Blue Ribbon Panel Co-chair  
Washington State Ocean Acidification Blue Ribbon Panel Members